

PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
BURLINGTON, WI

VOL XVII ISSUE I



Special Interest:
Search Committee
News, p.2



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The Plymouth Epistle

Monthly Newsletter

PASTOR'S WORDS:

Dear Members and Friends of Plymouth UCC,

****(Disclaimer: This article is NOT in reaction to how I have experienced Plymouth UCC, it is in response to a question I have been asked many times over the past few months.)* As we embark on a new year, we begin again with resolutions. This year we're going to lose weight and exercise more and, and, and. This new year will also be important for our church as the search committee begins its work and we start to seriously look for a new pastor.

Several have asked me the question, "Are there pastors out there; do you think we'll be able to find someone?" There are definitely pastors out there. The fact that you are still offering a full-time position gives you an advantage. Many churches are going to part-time (in pay, but not necessarily in workload). If you are really concerned about whether or not you will be able to find a new pastor, support your church financially and continue to support the mission of the church as well.

Having said all of that, I think the question of whether or not you can find a new pastor is the wrong question to be asking. The more pertinent question is - Will you be able to keep the pastor you call?

I'm including a link in this newsletter to an article from Sojourners Magazine about the reason many pastors are leaving the ministry. I encourage you to read it and think about how this may affect your relationship with your next pastor. No matter who you call, that person will not be able to please everyone. What is important, as a congregation, is to have realistic expectations of your pastor. Rather than pointing out everything you think they do wrong, look for the good and celebrate what they are doing well.

After 30+ years, I can tell you, ministry is hard. When I look back, I can tell you the churches that worked hard to show appreciation and the ones that worked even harder to criticize and berate. In every church I have served there have been wonderful people with whom I continue to have a relationship. The difference between a healthy church and an unhealthy church is not whether or not they have difficult people, every church has difficult people. The difference is how the leadership treats the pastor and whether or not the difficult people are allowed to be difficult without being challenged by other members. I remember a Diaconate meeting at a church I served when my children were babies. One member complained about some of the children being too noisy and how she wished they weren't so disruptive. I didn't feel like I could respond to her because it might come off as defensive since my boys were so young. Another member of the Diaconate, whose children were grown, said, "Now, Pat, you don't mean that, we'd much rather hear them than not see them." That was the end of that conversation. Too often, though, comments like Pat's are left unchallenged and then we wonder why we don't have young families in the church.

So, sisters and brothers, while the search committee starts their work to find a new pastor, I encourage the rest of you to do the work necessary to keep that new pastor.

Blessings for a healthy happy new year!

Rev. Becky

Here is the article I referenced: [https://sojo.net/articles/why-pastors-are-joining-great-resignation?](https://sojo.net/articles/why-pastors-are-joining-great-resignation?fbclid=IwAR3wZaC9D6qnQ0fFQnVNX9Gk_Ul1GGjFUiR5q59VMUjLDo_Q7tPOVwjNw)

[fbclid=IwAR3wZaC9D6qnQ0fFQnVNX9Gk_Ul1GGjFUiR5q59VMUjLDo_Q7tPOVwjNw](https://sojo.net/articles/why-pastors-are-joining-great-resignation?fbclid=IwAR3wZaC9D6qnQ0fFQnVNX9Gk_Ul1GGjFUiR5q59VMUjLDo_Q7tPOVwjNw)
[OC](#)

MODERATOR'S WORDS:

For those who were not able to attend the worship service on the 19th, you missed a delightful program featuring our children and youth. And you also missed an important announcement.

The Operating Council finalized the selection of the members for the church's Search Committee. The group is a solid representation of our congregation whom I believe will move forward with purpose and vision as they undertake the task of finding our next pastor.

The committee's members are:

Jill Albrecht	Gidget Brown
Joe Iselin	Ron Moersfelder
Jacqueline Naughton	Steve Picazo
Glen Stoll	

They will begin their journey together in January when they are able to meet with the WI Associate Conference minister for our area and discuss the process and steps required to complete it.

Please keep this group in your prayers as they take on this critical mission to help lead us into the chapter of Plymouth Congregational Church.

**PPRC:****Introducing the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee**

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee may not be what you think it is. Like many things in our church, both the committee's name and its job has changed over the years. In 2021, we had a meeting with UCC Conference officials to help us define and refine the PPRC's job going forward. We've incorporated what we learned into our new Mission Description. Here are the highlights:

1. To promote growth in the relationship between pastor and congregants.
2. To act as an advisory group to the pastor.
3. To be a support group for the pastor's leadership.
4. To maintain confidentiality of discussions

There's a lot to cover under those four points*, but the main focus is that we will try to work with both the pastor and parish members to solve problems and make Plymouth a better church.

It is important to note that per conference guidelines, the PPRC is *not* a personnel or evaluation committee, a conduit for anonymous complaints or comments, a decision-making committee, or a disciplining body.

We hope to share more about our work and cover any questions you have in future Epistles.

Stay Safe & Well in the New Year – Steve Sullivan, Chair PPRC

*You can read more in the 1-page mission description, which the office maintains for every Plymouth team and committee.

Committee Members: Diane Hanson, Laura Murin, Steve Sullivan, Peggy Voss, Rev. Becky Johnston

Worship Opportunities for January

January 2 – 2nd Sunday After Christmas

Scripture: John 1:10-18

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served.

January 9 – Baptism of Christ

Scripture: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 16 – 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture: John 2: 1-11

January 23 – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture: Luke 4:14-21

January 30 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture: Luke 4:21-30



Good News! We have a new way to give to Plymouth UCC: The Square. All you need is a credit card: choose the amount, swipe/insert your card, and decide how you want to receive a receipt. Receipt options are email, printed, or no receipt. We will have someone by the machine each week to help you, if needed. Just a reminder, there is also electronic giving through the Tithe.ly app on your phone. The square will be set up by the offering plates as you enter church.



Dear Members of Plymouth UCC,
Thank you for your generosity this Christmas. I have been deeply touched by your kindness. Serving as your Interim Pastor has brought great joy to me. I am truly grateful.

Blessings,
Rev. Becky



DECORATIONS

Wednesday, January 5th at 6:00 pm, please join us to provide input on updating our Advent and Christmas decorations. If interested, please contact Lori Benstead or leave a message with Kathy O'Brien, our church secretary.



MISSIONS:

2021 was a very active year preparing carryout meals for Love, Inc. Thank you to our church family for the monetary donations for earth-friendly supplies, the delicious and nutritious food, and the folks who assembled and handed out the meals. Numerous comments of appreciation by the recipients were received at the time of pick up, including, "I just love the meals from Plymouth!"

VALENTINE'S COOKIE PROJECT

If you like to bake, we have just the project for you. Please bring in two dozen of your favorite Valentine's cookies to church to share by Sunday, February 6. We will be assembling them after church on February 6 and will be delivering them before Valentine's Day.

If there is someone you know who could use a pick-me-up, or is a shut in and would like a treat, please contact the office with information including name, phone number (and address for recipient). You may email plymouthuccoffice@gmail.com or call 262-763-6890.

**Boxed
by Ann Weems**

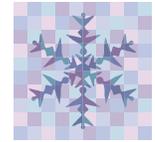
I must admit to a certain guilt
about stuffing the Holy Family into a box
in the aftermath of Christmas.
It's frankly a time of personal triumph when,
each Advent's eve, I free them (and the others)
from a year's imprisonment
boxed in the dark of our basement.
Out they come, one by one,
struggling through the straw,
last year's tinsel still clinging to their robes.
Nevertheless, they appear,
ready to take their place again
in the light of another Christmas.
The Child is first
because he's the one I'm most reluctant to box.
Attached forever to his cradle, he emerges,
apparently unscathed from the time spent upside
down
to avoid the crush of the lid.
His mother, dressed eternally in blue,
still gazes adoringly,
in spite of the fact that
her features are somewhat smudged.

Joseph has stood for eleven months,
holding valiantly what's left of his staff,
broken twenty Christmases ago
by a child who hugged a little too tightly.
The Wise Ones still travel,
though not quite so elegantly,
the standing camel having lost its back leg
and the sitting camel having lost one ear.
However, gifts intact, they are ready to move.
The shepherds, walking or kneeling,
sometimes confused with Joseph
(who wears the same dull brown),
tumble forth, followed by three sheep
in very bad repair.
There they are again,
not a grand set surely,
but one the children (and now the grandchildren)
can touch and move about to reenact that silent
night.
When the others return,
we will wind the music box on the back of the
stable
and light the Advent candles
and go once more to Bethlehem.
And this year, when it's time to pack the figures
away,
we'll be more careful that Peace and Goodwill
are not also boxed for another year!





January Volunteers



Ministry	Jan 2nd	Jan 9th	Jan 16th	Jan 23rd	Jan 30th
Acolyte					
AV Operator	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson
Liturgist	Don Howell	Jamie Kennow	Nikki Burd	John Gibbon	Lori Benstead
Ushers	Tim & Kay Burd	Jackie Kastengren & Wally Brown	Steve Picazo & Andrew Picazo	Stephanie Eveland & Diane Hanson	Pat Sandstrom & Nikki Burd

**Deadline for the February issue of *The Plymouth Epistle* is
Thursday, January 20.
Thanks, Kathy**

PLYMOUTH UCC ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Rev. Rebecca Johnston, Interim Minister
 Financial Secretary, Stephanie Eveland
 Office Secretary, Kathleen O'Brien



Children's Ministry, Tracy Freitag
 plymouthuccimpact@gmail.com
 Custodian, Jeffrey Hughes

Choir Director, Jamie Kennow
 Organist & Bell Choir Director, Diane Olson
 Wedding Coordinator, Marty Baker

PLYMOUTH CHILDREN'S CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Sara Trewyn, Program Director
 Phyllis Hancock, Assistant Director



**REV. REBECCA JOHNSTON,
INTERIM MINISTER**

OFFICE HOURS

By appointment only; please call or email Pastor for availability.

PLYMOUTH UCC OFFICE HOURS

Steph: Mon & Wed 8:30am-2:00pm
 Kathy: Tues & Thurs 8:00am-2:00pm
 Fridays: *8:00am-12:00pm

*Labor Day-Memorial Day only.

Church Office: 262-763-6890

Web Site: www.plymouthucc.church

Minister: plymouthuccpastor@gmail.com

Financial Secretary: plymouthuccfinance@gmail.com

Office Secretary: plymouthuccoffice@gmail.com

1-Dylan Runhkel
 2-Sammi Brenner
 3-Harmony Jones
 4-Pat Brown
 6-Eric Lindell
 6-Diane Olson
 6-Dana Marty
 7-Betty Mathews
 7-Henry Peterson
 9-Tracy Freitag
 10-Gabriela Bowman
 14-Robyn Warner

14-Suzanne Jagodzinski
 15-Kerry-Anne Greeter
 16-Halie Behnke
 17-Kim Lunderskov
 20-Stacy Novak
 21-Scott Freitag
 22-Kay Pockat
 23-Nicole Schultz
 23-Elliot Kerkhoff
 24-Mary Ellen Close
 24-Stacie Coleman
 25-Marilyn Gander



26-Abby Ilger
 26-Andrew Novak
 27-Bob Kastengren
 28-Rayni Van Swol
 28-Corrinne Hammes
 29-Sarah Peterson
 31-Jolene Peterson

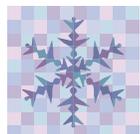
PARKING REMINDER

In an effort to be a good neighbor to Town Bank, let's remember to PARK IN THE PLYMOUTH CHURCH LOT located directly across the street (on the corner of Washington & Johnson), especially Mondays through Saturdays when the bank is conducting normal business hours but also during winter evening hours, to allow their plows to clear their lot. The Town Bank has continued to generously share their private lot with us on Sunday mornings. Please show our appreciation by using our own lot Mondays through Saturdays to avoid impeding on their operations. Thank you.

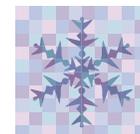
6-Daniel & Kelly Iselin
 14-Gary & Suzanne Jagodzinski



POSITION	NAME	GROUP FACILITATOR OF
Minister	Rev. Rebecca (Becky) Johnston	n/a
Moderator	John Gibbon	n/a
Vice Moderator		Mission & Social Action
Past Moderator	Nikki Burd	Stewardship & Budget
Recording Secretary	Carolyn Schoneck	n/a
Treasurer	Mary Ellen Close	Finance
Member at Large	Tasha Escobar	Membership & Involvement
Member at Large	Deanna Snyder	Spiritual Enrichment
Member at Large	Karen Iselin	Christian Education & Fellowship



January Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Special Music Service 10:00 Impact 11:00	3 Bells 6:00	4 Choir 6:30	5 6:00 Decora- tions Mtg	6	7	8
9 Bells Service 10:00 Impact 11:00 Decorations Removal	10 Bells 6:00	11 10:30 Prayer Mtg Choir 6:30	12 OC Mtg	13 Missions Mtg 6:30	14	15
16 Choir Service 10:00 Impact 11:00	17 Bells 6:00	18 Choir 6:30	19	20 February Epistle Deadline	21	22
23 Special Music Service 10:00 Impact 11:00	24 Bells 6:00	25 Choir 6:30	26	27	28	29
30 Choir Service 10:00 Impact 11:00	31					



**PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
124 W. WASHINGTON
STREET
BURLINGTON, WI
53105-1423
262-763-6890**

**ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY
JANUARY 2022
EPISTLE**

*If you no longer wish to be
on our mailing list, please
notify us by mail,
telephone,
(262-763-6890)
or
email
plymouthuccoffice
@gmail.com*



As We Start the New Year

**Welcome
2022**